

## **GRADE 8 English Language Arts**

### **Reading and Responding: Lesson 9**

Read aloud to the students the material that is printed in **boldface type** inside the boxes. Information in regular type inside the boxes and all information outside the boxes should **not** be read to students. Possible student responses are included in parentheses after the questions.

Any directions that ask you to do something, such as to turn to a page or to hand out materials to students, will have an arrow symbol (  $\Longrightarrow$  ) by them.

#### *Purpose of Lesson 9:*

In this lesson, the tutor and students will

- read a poem,
- develop strategies for reading poetry,
- practice answering multiple-choice questions, and
- practice using context clues.

#### *Equipment/Materials Needed:*

- Student Worksheets Reading and Responding Lessons 9 – 1 and 9 – 2
- Pencils

#### *Preparations before Lesson 9 begins:*

- The poem “The Road Not Taken” will be read aloud to students. It is found on page 97.

## *LESSON 9: Reading and Responding*

Following your introductory remarks to students, say:

**Reading a poem is not the same as reading a short story or a book. In a short story, you have sentences that are grouped into paragraphs. Paragraphs may be grouped into chapters, and then chapters can be combined to make a book.**

**Poetry is different. Poetry is usually divided into lines, and then the lines are grouped into stanzas. Poetry has a rhythmical quality not always found in stories. Poetry sometimes rhymes. Often times a poet uses words to paint a picture for us or to create an image.**

**Probably the most difficult thing about reading poetry has to do with punctuation. You see, a line of poetry is not necessarily a complete thought. When you read poetry, you really have to pay attention to the punctuation. If you don't pay attention to the punctuation marks, the poem may not make any sense to you.**

⇒ Distribute Student Worksheet Reading and Responding Lesson 9 – 1.

Then say:

**Here is a well-known poem by Robert Frost, “The Road Not Taken.” Before we read it, let’s practice some techniques that might be useful to you if you were assigned to read this poem and answer some questions.**

**How many stanzas are there in this poem? Pause.**  
(Response: four)

**Yes, there are four stanzas. How many lines are there in each stanza? Pause.**  
(Response: five)

**What is the first word of the second stanza? Pause.**  
(Response: then)

**What is the first word of the second line? Pause.**  
(Response: and)

**Pay close attention – there is a difference in line two and stanza two!**

**Look at stanza one. It is a good example of what I mentioned earlier about the punctuation being so important.**

**What punctuation mark is at the end of line one?** (Response: comma) **What punctuation mark is at the end of line two?**

(Response: nothing) **What punctuation mark is at the end of line three?**

(Response: nothing)

**What punctuation mark is at the end of line four?** (Response: nothing) **What punctuation mark is at the end of line five?**

(Response: semicolon)

**If you just read the poem line by line, it won't make any sense at all to you. In the first stanza, that comma tells you to take a little pause. But since there are no marks at the ends of lines 2, 3, and 4, you just keep reading without pausing or stopping.**

Then say:

**Let's practice reading the first stanza aloud together. We won't really make a stop until we get to the end of the stanza. Let's read stanza one in unison.**

It will probably take two or more readings of this stanza for students to develop the rhythm of reading aloud. It is important that they hear and realize that this poem does not consist of five separate thoughts, but in fact consists of just one thought or idea.

Then say:

**When you read poetry, you need to know who the speaker is. The speaker is the voice that the poet creates to communicate the message of the poem. It may be the poet himself or herself. It may be a character or even an animal.**

**In this poem, who do you think the "I" is? Pause.**

(Response: probably the poet)

**Yes, most likely it is the poet himself.**

**Sometimes poets use language that is unique or special to poetry. For instance, look at that last stanza.**

**“I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:”**

**What in the world does that mean - ages and ages hence? Pause.**  
(Response: a long time from now)

**It means a long time from now, but the poet didn’t say it in ordinary everyday words. Sometimes you have to update the poet’s language into modern speech. Your teacher may have had you paraphrase a poem. *Paraphrasing* is restating a passage in your own words.**

Say:

**Poets like to give us lots of images! They like for the reader to use all five senses.**

**What are your five senses? Pause.**  
(Response: sight, sound, touch, taste, smell)

**Which sense does the poet use mostly in “The Road Not Taken”?**  
Pause. (Response: sight)

**Yes, he wants us to see those two roads!**

**You follow along now while I read the poem. Listen carefully; try to see the images that the poet is painting with his words.**  
Read the poem.

Then say:

**I will let you in on another little secret about poetry – you usually have to read the poem more than once. Yes, you heard me correctly! It often takes several readings to begin to understand the poem.**

Read the poem a second time or have the group read in unison.

Then say:

**Every reading of the poem will give you some additional information or some additional understanding.**

**Poems are a lot like onions. Seriously. You can peel away the layers of the onion. Poems often have layers of meaning, and it takes you several readings (peelings) to understand what the poet is saying.**

**Well, time to work on the questions. Let's see how well we can interpret and analyze this poem.**

⇒ Distribute Student Worksheet Reading and Responding Lesson 9 – 2.  
Be sure every student has a pencil.

Then say:

**Please answer the five multiple-choice questions now. After you have finished, sit quietly while you wait to discuss the answers.**  
Allow time for students to complete the task.

Say:

**Number one. “The poet wrote, ‘Two roads *diverged* in a yellow wood.’ What does the word *diverged* mean?”**

**Choice A: appeared**

**Choice B: curved**

**Choice C: branched off**

**Choice D: continued on**

**What is the correct response?**

(Response: Choice C: branched off)

***Appeared, curved, and continued on* all sound like good answers; but as you read a little further in the poem, you realize that *diverged* means branched off into two different roads.**

Say:

**The second one was also a vocabulary question. “The poet writes, ‘And both that morning equally lay in leaves no step had *trodden* black.’ What is the meaning of the word *trodden*?”**

***Trodden* is not a word we use very much these days. What do you think it means?**

(Response: Choice C: stepped on or over)

**Yes, Choice C. Since the speaker is out in the woods, we can eliminate Choice A and Choice B. To be truthful, Choice D didn’t really make any sense.**

**Number three. “What conclusion can you draw about the speaker in the first stanza?”**

**Which answer did you choose?**

(Response: Choice B: hesitant and thoughtful)

**Why did you choose Letter B?**

(Response: He is standing at a fork in the road and he doesn’t want to make a wrong decision; he is trying to decide which way to go; he wants to choose carefully.)

**By the way, how many of you reread the first stanza before answering this question? Pause.**

**It’s probably not a bad idea to reread it!**

**Number four should have been an easy one for you. “Which feature of the selection most strongly indicates that the selection is a poem?” I know you got that question right!**

Say:

**What is the correct response?**

(Response: Choice B: it is divided into lines and stanzas.)

**Why didn't you Choose A: it appeals to the senses?**

(Response: Stories can also appeal to the senses; the question said most strongly indicates.)

**Good job!**

**The last one. "What do the two roads symbolize?"**

**Could they symbolize different ways out of the woods?**

(Response: no)

**Could they symbolize different ways to return home?**

(Response: no)

**Could the two roads symbolize different ways to get to town?**

(Response: no)

**Could the two roads symbolize different choices in life?**

(Response: yes)

**Yes, the two roads could stand for the directions the speaker can take with his life.**

Then say:

**In closing, remember that when you have a poem to read, you probably need to read it more than once! Pay attention to the images and the language that the poet uses.**

**Probably the most important thing to watch is the punctuation. The punctuation tells you when to pause, when to stop, and when to keep on reading. Understanding the purpose of punctuation will make reading and understanding the poem a lot easier!**

**THE ROAD NOT TAKEN**  
**Robert Frost**

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,  
And sorry I could not travel both  
And be one traveler; long I stood  
And looked down one as far as I could  
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,  
And having perhaps the better claim,  
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;  
Though as for that, the passing there  
Had worn them really about the same.

And both that morning equally lay  
In leaves no step had trodden black.  
Oh, I kept the first for another day!  
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,  
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference.



## Student Worksheet Reading and Responding Lesson 9 – 2

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

1. The poet writes, “Two roads *diverged* in a yellow wood, and sorry I could not travel both.” What does the word *diverged* mean?
  - A. appeared
  - B. curved
  - C. branched off
  - D. continued on
2. The poet writes, “And both that morning equally lay in leaves no step had *trodden* black.” What is the meaning of the word *trodden*?
  - A. mowed recently
  - B. replanted with seed
  - C. stepped on or over
  - D. watered and made muddy
3. What conclusion can the reader draw about the speaker in the first stanza?
  - A. He is lonely and sad.
  - B. He is hesitant and thoughtful.
  - C. He is hurried and rushed.
  - D. He is kind and generous.
4. Which feature of the selection most strongly indicates that it is a poem?
  - A. It appeals to the senses.
  - B. It is divided into lines and stanzas.
  - C. It has a title.
  - D. It is told in first person.
5. What could the two roads symbolize?
  - A. They could symbolize different ways out of the woods.
  - B. They could symbolize different ways to return home.
  - C. They could symbolize different ways to get to town.
  - D. They could symbolize different choices in life.